

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph at page 1, line 24 – page 2, line 7 with the following rewritten paragraph:

If the occlusion reducing type NO_x catalyst (which might hereinafter be simply called a catalyst or a NO_x catalyst) is disposed in an exhaust passageway of the internal combustion engine capable of performing the lean combustion, the catalyst absorbs NO_x contained in the exhaust gas when the exhaust gas having a lean air-fuel ratio flows, and releases NO_x, as NO₂, absorbed by the catalyst when the exhaust gas having a stoichiometric ratio (theoretical air-fuel ratio) or a rich air-fuel ratio flows. Further, this is reduced into N₂ by a reducing component such as HC and CO contained in the exhaust gas, ~~viz., thereby purging the NO_x is~~ purged by disassociation.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 17, lines 22-25 with the following rewritten paragraph:

Further, as a comparison in contrast, the cell 51, ~~formed-with-not~~ without the notched portion 50, is provided in the exhaust passageway, and the HC quantity in the exhaust gas is measured in the same way as the above-described method.